

SOCIALIST STUDIES

NO. 19

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HARRY YOUNG, OBITUARY

**OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN**

**Communications to: General Secretary, 71 Ashbourne Court,
Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB**

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

THE YUGOSLAV WAR, CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES

As with all wars in our times, the cause of this war is the competition inherent in capitalism, which is a society based on private property, and classes. This basis leads to competition for economic resources, for capital and profits. Periodically this competition flares up into war. Socialists argue that wars solve no problems for the working class. The Socialist Party of Great Britain has consistently urged workers not to get involved in supporting one side against the other.

"There is only one safe rule for the working class to follow....Ask yourself the question: Have the working class of one nation any interest in slaughtering (and being slaughtered by) the workers of another?" (War and the Working Class, SPGB, 1936)

This particular war raised many questions. Was it simply due to "basic human nature"? Was it caused by "ancient ethnic hatreds"? And why was the U.N. so impotent in trying to stop the war?

HUMAN NATURE?

The assertion that war is a "human disease" from which there is no escape, is inaccurate, defeatist and simplistic. However if it is a disease, there are conditions which would make it less likely, just as better food, housing and hygiene reduces the incidence of many infectious diseases. The "human nature" argument that war is an inevitable outcome of the evil inherent in human nature, falls down when you look at various places, at different times. For example did

the "human nature" of the British and the Germans change after 1918 and 1945, when the same people who had been slaughtering each other suddenly became at "peace"? Even as late as 1993, many were trying to **avoid** getting drawn into the Yugoslav conflict. If war is not universal and perpetual, this theological concept of original sin causing wars is of no use as an explanation.

ANCIENT ETHNIC HATREDS ?

The politicians and media pundits offered another glib "explanation" for the cause of the conflict: "ancient ethnic hatreds". This is also a false explanation. Serbs, Croats and Bosnians are not distinct ethnic groups. They look alike and speak the same language. Serbs and Croats only differ in using different alphabets.

Conflict between Serbs and Croats was not aroused until the 19th century growth of nationalism as capitalism spread throughout Europe. The ideology of nationalism has often proved useful to rival capitalist groups in staking out their territories, by establishing new nation states. In 1830, Serbia became independent from the Turks; whilst Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia remained under the Austro-Hungarian Empire till 1914. These supposed "ancient ethnic hatreds" were neither ethnic nor ancient. The hatred whipped up in recent years now feeds on recent atrocities, as well as those of World War II. However to say that hatred **fuels** the conflict is not the same as claiming that this hatred **caused** the conflict.

THE REVIVAL OF NATIONALISM

Within post-war state capitalist Yugoslavia, there were competing demands on the Federal government from different groups of capitalists. Each Republic competed for investment funds. Even before Tito's death (1980), these economic tensions led to a

growing Croat nationalism. Croatian politicians like Tudjman pointed to the "unfair" distribution of economic resources by the central government, based in the Serb capital, Belgrade. Most foreign exchange was realised by the Croatian tourist industry, yet in the first 20 years after the war, less than 20 per cent of the Yugoslav National Bank credit resources went to Croatia, whilst nearly 60 per cent went to Serbia. By the late 1960's, nearly half Yugoslavia's industry was based in Serbia. Croatia had a very low rate of population growth and the second highest emigration rate in the world.

Tudjman also claimed that there was systematic discrimination against Croats gaining positions of power in the State, (Party, army, civil service etc.) Croatian nationalist complaints came to a head in 1980 at a time of economic crisis with hyper inflation, rising unemployment and falling standards of living, real incomes falling by some 10 per cent throughout Yugoslavia.

The pattern is very similar to that which led to Bangladesh becoming independent from Pakistan. Capitalists based in East Pakistan saw "their" funds being taken by the central government to enrich the capitalists of its own home base; also there was systematic discrimination against Bengalis in government and military appointments. A similar theme can be seen in Nigeria where oil rich Ogoniland gets little investment from central government.

The same economic tensions which fostered Croat nationalism also, paradoxically, encouraged Serb nationalism. This nationalism was exploited in region after region by Milosevic to come to power, and to oust his enemies. Milosevic managed to control half the votes in

Yugoslavia's federal presidency, he could block any policy he disliked, and this led Slovenia (1989) and Croatia (1990) to secede from Yugoslavia. Whether the political leaders themselves believed in their new found nationalism, or whether they just used it as "*it was politically very profitable*", (*Death of Yugoslavia* L. Silber & A. Little, p 39) is irrelevant. The effect was the same: Many Serbs came to see themselves as a master race.

ATROCITIES

This helps to explain the atrocities and concentration camps. In World War II the Germans and Japanese, to justify their belief that they were superior beings, deliberately starved and ill treated their prisoners, till these came to be seen as "sub human", representatives of biologically inferior stock. Biologist, F.A.E. Crew, described concentration camps and prison camps as "*mechanisms for the de-humanization of their enemies*". (*Must Man Wage War* 1952)

If Serbs did this, so too did the Croats. Bosnians were held in Croat camps. "*they look like in the Nazi times; even worse, they don't get food and water, and are abused*" A Croat politician told Tudjman of this and got a dusty answer: "*the others have camps as well*" (*Death of Yugoslavia* p 333).

Atrocity stories fuelled the conflict, as refugees poured into formally peaceful towns and villages. A sense of identity - Serb, Croat, Muslim etc. - was forged out of shared dangers, and wiped out any sense of class consciousness, class identity. As the SPGB put it in 1936:

"*Wars have the baneful effect of veiling the class struggle by developing a false sense of identity between exploiters and exploited in each country*" (*War and the Working Class*).

Nationalism, the ideological justification for war, developed out of the economic tensions of capitalism in Yugoslavia, and the political instability there. The aim of the participants was to redraw the map, creating a Greater Serbia, a more powerful Croatia. Behind the scenes, their patrons, the great powers, were manoeuvring for a larger sphere of influence, a term not used in public by the politicians. No peace deal could be settled that was unacceptable to Serbia's patrons in the Kremlin, or to Croatia's western friends. The many peace deals signed were mere scraps of paper, instantly reneged on, never enforced, as the parties jockeyed for position, before the super powers started to get more seriously involved.

Meanwhile the Socialist message, a simple one, is drowned in the din of battle: *"The cause of war today is the rivalry inherent in capitalism. Those who endorse capitalism are supporting a social system that gives rise to war. (The Socialist Party & War SPGB 1970). To those who try to enlist our support on one side or another, we reply: "Whichever side wins, war leaves the real problem unsolved, and indeed, by creating still more national hatred, it makes the solution more difficult than ever" (The Czech Crisis and the Workers, SPGB 1938).* Whatever way the lines are drawn on the map, there is no un-doing of the horrors of war.

There is no guarantee that such wars will not happen again. As long as capitalism lasts with its private property, classes, economic competition and its arbitrary division of mother Earth into competing nation states and rival spheres of influence, war is always a possibility. To end wars and their terrors, we must create a society fit for humans to live in without fear: a Socialist world based on common ownership and democratic control and co-operation.

REFORMS IN REVERSE

The recent (December 1995) public employees' strikes in France were sparked off, so we are told by the press, because Mr. Jaffe, the French prime minister, wanted to push through certain "reforms". These reforms would have cut state pensions, increased the age eligibility by several years and increased compulsory pensions contributions. The French trade unions, through a series of strikes which virtually paralysed the entire transport system, were able to defeat for the time being at least, the employers' (the State's) intentions. It is not our present purpose to deal with the specific details of this particular group of strikes, but to draw attention to Mr. Jaffe's claim that he was trying to introduce a series of reforms.

Likewise, Mr. Yeltsin the Russian President, recently became the toast of all European governments, because he too started to introduce "reforms". His programme of reforms put up prices by some 300 per cent, closed down a large number of state enterprises putting thousands of state employees out of work. Also by issuing new currency and altering the value of the rouble, he reduced state pensions and confiscated a large proportion of worker's savings. Unlike Mr. Jaffe, Mr. Yeltsin was not inhibited in his action by strong trade unions as in France. Inevitable the Russian workers were unable to put up any meaningful resistance to the introduction of these "reforms". Undoubtedly these reforms were for the benefit of both the French and Russian governments who, as is the case with all governments, were acting on behalf of their capitalist paymasters.

Reforms used to be regarded as palliative measures enacted for the benefit of the working class. For example the Factory Acts, Public Health, Education, Housing, Social Security etc. The fact that these reforms were also in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole is often overlooked by the social reformers. It appears nowadays that the word "reform" has lost its meaning.

Every politician who wants to introduce an unpopular measure always refers to it as a reform. Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Liberal Democrat M.P.), wants to abolish mortgage income tax relief, which will adversely affect thousands of workers with mortgages. Mr. Lilley (Tory minister), wants to restrict payment of Housing Benefit to particular categories of young people, excluding others, which will similarly affect many. Both Mr. Ashdown and Mr. Lilley refer to their proposals as "reforms".

This ambiguity about the meaning of reforms will add to the existing confusion prevalent among supporters of reforms. These people simply cannot accept that all reforms, whether described as political reforms, constitutional reforms or economic reforms, whether they benefit certain groups of workers or harm other groups, are merely superficial adjustments to the administration of capitalism.

The fact that reform measures form an indispensable part of the capitalist political parties' programmes, is in itself proof positive that reforms are a necessary part of capitalism and therefore opposed to Socialism. No reform has ever challenged the capitalists' right to own the means of production and to exploit the working class. No reform ever could. To claim as some do, that supporting reforms will encourage the workers to understand Socialism is utter nonsense. The workers' appetite for reforms will

grow with what it feeds on, and their frustration with capitalism will grow with it. The solution to the problems facing the working class lies not in pursuing will o' the wisp reforms or opposing others, but in ending capitalism, and replacing it with Socialism.

HOUSING, THE PERSISTENT PROBLEM

Why is it that after dozens of housing reforms, so very little has been achieved? In 1872 Engels noted the tiny level of funding allowed by English Liberal governments: their principle was "*to propose social laws only when compelled to do so and, if at all possible, to avoid carrying into effect those already existing*".

He argued that since the state "*is nothing but the organised collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists as against the exploited classes*", it is futile to expect the state to do anything effective to solve the problem:

"What the individual capitalists ... do not want, their state also does not want. If therefore the individual capitalists deplore the housing shortage, but can hardly be persuaded even superficially to palliate its most terrifying consequences, then the collective capitalist, the state, will not do much more".

(The Housing Question)

As with housing, so with poverty, famine, war. Reformers wring their hands. They, the politicians and the media declare it all very deplorable, but they have no solutions. We do.

P. H. WICKSTEED'S CRITICISM OF MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE

In October 1884 the magazine **Today** published a criticism of Marx's labour theory of value by the Reverend P. H. Wicksteed. In January 1885 they published a comment by G. B. Shaw under the title "A Jevonian Criticism of Marx", and in April 1885 Wicksteed wrote a "Rejoinder". Edward R. Pease's **The History of the Fabian Society** (1916) contains an appendix by George Bernard Shaw in which he referred to the articles in **Today**. Shaw said that he was so impressed:

"with the literary power and overwhelming documentation of Marx's indictment of nineteenth century Commercialism and the Capitalist system, that I defended him against all comers in and out of season until Philip Wicksteed, the well known Dante commentator, then a popular Unitarian Minister, brought me to a standstill by a criticism of Marx I did not understand. This was the first appearance in Socialist controversy of the value theory of Jevons, published in 1871".

Shaw went on to say this of his reply to Wicksteed:

"My reply, which was not bad for a joke, and contained the germ of the economic argument for equality of income which I put forward twenty-five years later, elicited only a brief rejoinder; but the upshot was that I put myself into Mr. Wicksteed's hands and became a convinced Jevonian".

In the volume **Fabian essays in Socialism**, published by the Fabian Society in 1889, Shaw dismissed Ricardo's wage theory and Marx's

theory, which Shaw said was Ricardo's value theory, and put forward Jevon's Utility theory, saying that Jevons "*demonstrated that the value of a commodity is a function of the quantity available, and may fall to zero when the supply outruns the demand so far as to make the final increment of the supply useless*".

WICKSTEED'S ARGUMENT IN TODAY

In 1884 when the Wicksteed criticism was published in **Today** there was no published English translation of Marx's **Capital**. The International Library edition of Volume 1 was published in London in 1886, and the Kerr edition in Chicago in 1906. These editions were a translation from the third German edition. Wicksteed quoted from the second German edition, giving his own translation of the German text.

Wicksteed presented the following three propositions as "*a fair summary of Marx's argument*".

First the (exchange) value of a ware is determined by the amount of labour needed on the average to produce it.

Second There is such a degree of correspondence between the value of a ware and its average selling price, that for theoretical purposes we must assume that nominally wares are bought and sold at their values.

Third Labour-force (in our industrial societies) is a ware subject to same laws and conditions of value and exchange as other wares.

Wicksteed said that his criticism of Marx related only to the *First* and *Third*. He had nothing to urge "*against the Second*". He was however mistaken in thinking that Marx held that commodities sold at their values. Marx held that in developed capitalism,

commodities sold at what he called their "*prices of production*", some permanently above value and the rest permanently below value. It is true that this was dealt with in Volume 3 of **Capital**, which was not published until 1894, but already in Volume 1, Marx had repeatedly warned readers that the divergence of price from value would be dealt with in Volume 3, and that it was only by way of illustration that in Volume 1 he had treated price as equal to value. For example:

"The price form, however, is not only compatible with the possibility of a quantitative incongruity between magnitude of value and price,, but it may also conceal a qualitative inconsistency, so much so, that, although money is nothing but the value form of commodities, price ceases altogether to express value".

(**Capital** Vol 1 Page 115 Kerr edition. See also pages 244, 335)

Wicksteed's case against the *First* of the above mentioned three propositions, related to Marx's argument that the one factor common to all commodities after we have ruled out specific use values which make them qualitatively different, is that of *being the products of labour*.

Wicksteed did not disagree with Marx about the differences between different commodities, he wrote "*as I should express it, commodities differ from one another in their specific utilities*".

Where Wicksteed criticised Marx was in Marx's statement that "*the labour does not count unless it is useful*". In the Kerr English translation (page 88) it reads as follows:

"Lastly, nothing can have value, without being an object of utility.

If the thing is useless, so is the labour contained in it; the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value".

Wicksteed claimed that this last statement by Marx "*surrenders the whole of the previous analysis, for if it is only useful labour that counts, then in stripping the wares of all the specific properties conferred upon them by specific kinds of useful work, we must not be supposed to have stripped them of abstract utility, conferred upon them by abstractly useful work*".

It is difficult to follow Wicksteed's reasoning. Marx was dealing with **commodities**, that is to say use values produced for sale, social use values. A thing that is useless is not saleable and is not a commodity. So when Marx said that the labour contained in a useless thing does not count and creates no value, he was not contradicting what he had said about the use values and exchange values of commodities.

WICKSTEED ON "ABSTRACT UTILITY"

Wicksteed disputes Marx's conclusion that socially necessary labour needed in production is the only common measure making exchange possible. Wicksteed wrote:

"It cannot be urged that there is no common measure to which we can reduce the satisfaction derived from such different articles as Bibles and brandy, for instance (to take an illustration suggested by Marx), for as a matter of fact we are all of us making such reductions every day. If I am willing to give the same sum of money for a family bible as for a dozen of brandy, it is because I have reduced the respective satisfactions their possession will afford me to a common measure".

"What we really have to do is to put out of consideration the concrete and specific qualitative utilities in which they differ, leaving only the abstract and general quantitative utility in which they are identical".

Wicksteed (page 714) specifically included in the articles whose abstract utility we can judge, *"all exchangeable commodities, whether reproducible in indefinite quantities, like the family bibles and brandy, or strictly limited in quantity, like the 'Raphaels' one of which was purchased for the nation."*

This process of "abstract utility" judgements as being the determinant of value, is quite unrealistic. Is it really possible by such judgements to explain why an ounce of gold sells at thousands of times as much as an ounce of coal? Also the overwhelming majority of the population do not have views on the "abstract utility" of most commodities. The only people interested in the "Raphaels" are millionaires, art galleries and the art dealers. How many of those who treasure family bibles drink brandy?

These objections do not apply to Marx's view that the common measure embodied in all commodities which allows for their exchange, is abstract labour. That is the amount of socially necessary labour required in producing commodities, for this process goes on all the time in production. Every employer and every worker is involved in the process.

WICKSTEED'S CRITICISM OF MARX ON WAGES

In his third **Proposition**, Wicksteed holds Marx responsible for saying that labour power is subject to the same laws and conditions of value and exchange as other commodities.

This is not correct. Marx held that labour power is unlike other commodities. He wrote:

"On the other hand the number and extent of his" (the worker's) "so called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilisation of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which the class of free labourers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour power a historical and moral element" (Our emphasis). (*Capital* Vol 1, page 190 Kerr edition)

The other aspect of labour power which distinguishes it from the other commodities, is that it is the source of all new value, all new wealth. Without labour power, there can be no productive process within capitalism. The more socially necessary labour that is applied to a commodity, the more value is added to that commodity.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

**of 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,
London N12 8SB,**

has no connection with any other political party including the party using the same name based at 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. Persons wishing to send donations, subscriptions etc. should make their cheques payable to SOCIALIST STUDIES at the above address.

WICKSTEED & LOW WAGES

On page 706 Wicksteed wrote:

"What is it, then, in the conditions of modern industrialism that compels the producers of all wealth to make such hard terms with the non-producers? What is it that constantly fills the markets with men willing and anxious to sell their 'labour force' for the wages of bare subsistence?"

According to Wicksteed (page 707), Marx gives two answers. First that labour saving machinery is constantly throwing unemployed on the market and Second (Page 710) that it is the "*immanent law of capitalist production and no mere incidental development of it*". (i.e. surplus value). However Wicksteed totally fails to recognise that the capitalist class has power and forcibly protects the property rights of the capitalists. Workers have to seek work, because they are faced with harsher conditions as unemployed. In other words Wicksteed treats capitalism, not as a class system protected by force, but as a mere collection of producing and trading organisations and individuals.

"A thing can be a use value, without having value. This is the case wherever its utility to man is not due to labour. Such as air, virgin soil, natural meadows etc. A thing can be useful and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour, creates, indeed, use-value, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use-values, but use-values for others, social use values. Lastly, nothing can have value, without being an object of utility. If the thing is useless so is the labour contained in it: the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value". (Capital Vol. 1, pages 47 & 48)

OBITUARY, HARRY YOUNG

We are sad to record the loss of Harry Young ("Horatio"), born 28th February 1901; died 24th December 1995. Harry was born into dire poverty in Holloway, London. He very soon became interested in "left wing" politics and by the time he was sixteen he was speaking for various "left wing" organisations.

His cousin F. Peert was a founder member of the Communist Party and Harry had drifted into that organisation by the time he was nineteen. He was sent to Moscow to train for the English revolution and for some eight years he was one of the stars of the Young Communists, eventually becoming Secretary.

He became disenchanted with the Bolsheviks during the second half of the 1920's, and by devious means, secured his return to London. He ran the Communist Bookshop and when he resigned from the C. P. he lost that job. For a few years he lived a hand to mouth existence as a phone operator, tour operator and at one stage language teacher. He spoke good German and passable Russian. He went to Spain with an ambulance during the Spanish Civil War and retreated very rapidly.

He joined The Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1940, and promptly registered against National Service as a conscientious objector. During World War II he spoke at all our outdoor meeting places - including both Glasgow and Edinburgh. His great voice boomed out over Speaker's Corner effectively drowning the other speakers, and it has been said that his voice could be heard in the Lyons Corner House, some distance away on the other side of Marble Arch. He

was a sensation when Communist Party members tried to shout him down with "you aint never been to Rusher". He would tell them: "Yes and it's capitalism there same as here". He was usually told where to go himself! He received some death threats during the war from Communist Party members, overheard by other S.P.G.B. members.

For a number of years he wrote a number of good articles in the **Socialist Standard**. Until a matter of weeks before his death, he was politically active. He spoke in Hyde Park at the end of September 1995; did a T.V. interview and recorded for radio. On October 6th he gave one of his very witty lectures. A week later he was at the Tate Gallery and a few days later he and another member went to a day long exhibition at the Royal Society.

On the outdoor platform he was very humourous and he had a way of disarming hecklers by getting the crowd on his side. As an example of his style, in expounding the horrors of capitalism and the merits of Socialism, he was often accused by hecklers: "You're dreaming mate", to which Harry's reply would be "I'd rather have my dream than your bloody nightmare!"

His final illness was short. His contribution to the Socialist movement immense.

CORRECTION

Socialist Studies No 18 (page 2) made an incorrect reference to a member of the Islington Branch of the Clapham based Socialist Party being the publisher of **Discussion Bulletin**. The Islington Branch member publishes a journal called **Spanner**, whilst **Discussion Bulletin** is published in the U.S.A.

MARX & THE S.P.G.B.

A correspondent writes as follows:

"Please can you explain more on your views of Marx. As you believe Marx believed in a propertyless, classless, moneyless society, where did he state that? Were all Marx's predictions correct" (J. Atkins, Chatham).

Let us first make clear the S.P.G.B.'s attitude to Marx. We do not say, and never have said, that everything Marx said or wrote on a subject was right, and therefore we are bound to regard Marx's words as the last words on that subject.

The ideas of Socialism are not something that Marx created. They arise from the conditions produced by capitalism. What Marx did was to make a scientific study of the workings of capitalism and also the laws of social development which showed the origin of capitalism. Starting from this point Marx postulated his theory of class struggle largely because he saw the class struggle in operation in modern society. He saw the class struggle as the motive force of history. Again the class struggle was not the creation of Marx. It existed in various forms long before Marx, but it was he who discovered its essentially economic and political character; and he who saw it as the means to the forthcoming Socialist revolution. Most workers today may not understand the theory of the class struggle, but they certainly feel its effects in practice.

Marx's studies into capitalist political economy were unique and of great value to the revolutionary movement. His studies provided

the key which unlocked the door to reveal capitalism's innermost secret: the extraction of surplus value through the exploitation of the working class. No-one, including economists, had done this before, and Marx did it in a thorough, scientific and comprehensive way in his great work **Capital**.

Whilst we in The Socialist Party of Great Britain owe a great debt to Marx, we also have to stand on our own feet. Our case has to be judged and justified in the light of modern conditions whatever Marx may or may not have said.

Marx's 'predictions' arose logically from his analysis of capitalist production. He predicted that capital would be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, and that competition would drive out the small capitalists and abolish handicrafts. He predicted that capital would universally extend its rule to all forms of economic activity including agriculture. He predicted that crises and recessions would occur periodically and that they were an integral part of capitalist exchange relations, (although both he and Engels at first overestimated the frequency and the depth of recessions). He showed how unemployment was inevitable and insoluble within a capitalist economy. He also forecast the tendency for labour saving machinery to be introduced more and more into modern industry, replacing or reducing human labour power. In all of these he was right.

On the other hand, both he and Engels expected that Socialism would be established quickly, and that the workers would revolt against the chronically bad social conditions prevailing at the time and dispossess the capitalists. They even prepared a programme outlining how this was to be done. In these expectations they were

wrong. They had underestimated the resourcefulness of the capitalist class in promoting and setting up political reform movements which had the effect of distracting the workers' minds away from revolution, and side tracking the issue of Socialism.

As regards specific statements by Marx, there are many regarding Socialism as a classless society, without private property. The reader is referred to Section 2 of **The Communist Manifesto**. The closing passage of this document is perhaps one of the most famous.

"Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains: you have a world to win."

This is as true today as when it was written, as is the passage from **Wages, Price & Profit** (last page):

"Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' they (the workers) ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'"

It should be borne in mind that **The Communist Manifesto** was written when both Marx and Engels were young men, and Europe was emerging from feudalism, and capitalism and the working class were largely underdeveloped. Although it would be written differently today, it does contain the embryo of Marx and Engels' main ideas about capitalism and Socialism. We do not regard Marx as infallible, nor are we blind followers in the spirit of hero worship. However we claim that he was correct in his main ideas about, particularly his theory of value, which explained the exploitation of the working class scientifically, and showed its inevitability under capitalism. A first time reader might refer to **Wage Labour and Capital** as well as the above mentioned works.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

meets at 7.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in month at
Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, London NW6.

Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,
London N12 8SB

CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH

meets at 6 pm on the 4th Tuesday of month at
Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1

Correspondence to the Secretary, S.P.G.B., 31 Caernarvon Road,
Eynsbury, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 2RN (Tel: 01480 403345)

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.
Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities
should contact the Secretary.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

SUMMER SCHOOL 1996

With a General Election due within the next year, and the
possibility of yet another Labour Government, our theme for this
year is:-

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY

Sessions

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 12.00 - 1.30 | LABOUR PARTY IN AND OUT OF POWER. |
| 1.30 - 2.30 | light buffet luncheon. |
| 2.30 - 3.00 | Report of General Secretary
on our five years of operation. |
| 3.00 - 4.15 | LABOUR PARTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. |
| 4.15-5.30 | BLAIR & THE STAKEHOLDER SOCIETY. |

SUNDAY 16th JUNE 1996

**Marchmont Community Centre,
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1
(5 minutes Russell Square Tube Station)**

ALL WELCOME. ADMISSION FREE. QUESTIONS. DISCUSSION.

AUDIO TAPES

As promised in issue No. 18 we show the following selection.
A complete list of over 75 titles is available on request.

- 21. The rise and fall of the Clapham Socialist Party.
- 29. Capitalism - a letter on production.
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